

[241] The Kirghiz of the Kaying valley cultivate only a few acres of barley and eat little bread. Their staple food is milk and its products, *katak* or sour cream and *qurut*, a kind of cheese. 262 In most tents you will also find a cauldron of *mach* brewing, 251 the soup containing flour and milk already mentioned. *Qurut* is made by drying sour cream in goat-skins; the method is to hang the goat-skins full of cream about eight feet from the ground under a piece of cord netting stretched across the top of four posts. The netting keeps off eagles and hawks, while the height from the ground defeats dogs and other animals. When a Kirghiz is to be away from his home for a day or more, he takes with him for food a few balls of *qurut*, and supplements them with wild rhubarb and celery which he knows where to find on the mountain-side. Bread is made in solid lumps, the only leaven used being sour milk; the poorer families can seldom afford it, fortunately for their digestions. Meat is even more of a luxury; a sheep is only killed on great occasions, when the meat is boiled in large cauldrons, not roasted. Sometimes one of the *mergens* or hunters of the community succeeds in slaying an ibex hind with his ancient matchlock, and then there is great feasting.

438 A valley like Kaying is almost but not quite self-supporting. Boots, Kashgar cotton cloth, muslin and coloured handkerchiefs for the ladies, knives, etc., are bought by the men on their rare expeditions to Yangi Hissar, or from the itinerant traders from the plains who visit the valley two or three times during the season. The money for these purchases is found by the sale of such surplus local products as remain after the revenue and other demands of the Beg have been satisfied. These products include live stock, raw wool, rope and matting made of camel's or yak's hair, cheese, red fox pelts, and ibex

651 Chimghan, with Tersöze and other side-valleys, 60 households.
162 Khanterek, i.e. the main valley and its branches below the great gorge, including Kaying, Chopkana, Yapchan, etc., 30 households.

Terek Kichik (among the mountains on the east side of the Qaratash), 100 households.

The assessment of a typical division, the Chimghan, is as follows:

4 *saghins* of cheese, i.e. the output of 4 yaks in a year.

40 camel-hair ropes.

100 *charaks* of barley flour (1 *charak* 20 lbs.).

10 yaks or ponies to be lent for transport purposes whenever required.

Besides the above, the Beg exacts one sheep per household for himself; he receives no pay from the Chinese authorities.

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N A group of patrilineally
563 related families forms the basic economic (i. e., migrational)
621 unit in Mongol society. Pastures are distributed among such
S units. The structure of the society itself dictates a certain
[622] collectivistic working concept. Mongol social groupings are
563 led by tribal chieftains, who are directly responsible to the
[29] district Chinese official. Mongol society, unlike other North-
668 western societies, has not undergone great changes under
Communist influences. Their basic pattern of life has remained
the same as it was under the Manchu and Republican regimes.

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563 The Oirats (or Western Mongols:
233 The Oirats of the Northwest are primarily pastoral nomads.
[434] Their chief source of income is cattle, horses, sheep and
[131] goats. Because they live in a desert-steppe area they move
around in larger or smaller groups depending upon the avail-
able resources.

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563 The designation for these small economic and migrational
621 units or camps is "xotn" which includes a group of nuclear
[594] families patrilineally related - tracing descent from a common
[613] ancestor in the third, fourth, or fifth generation.

[597] Membership in this group can be gained by adoption, by
attachment of a daughter's husband in the case of a man
with no sons and of poor unrelated families or poor related
families on the paternal side. Although some poorer families
remained apart from these "xotn" it usually is more worth-
while to add their few cattle, etc., to that of the larger
group and render services in return for the benefits gained
thereby.

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[613] Among the Oirats the closer an individual's relationship
[554] to the ancestor, the greater prestige and status he enjoys in
this group.

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563 The headman or elder ("axalaci") dwells in a tent situated in
361 the front of the encampment facing south. The remainder of
[622] the group is arranged according to the age of the male members
in a circle behind the dwelling of the elder. The dependent
[613] families are situated in the rear of the circle but still according
[554] to the closeness of their relation to the ancestor.

S
563 Wives of members of these extended families are also
621 affected by the social set-up; their position and status varies
593 directly with that of their husbands, although a wife's position
562 as far as respect patterns go was never equal to her husband's.
A wife observes strict respect for her husband's kinsmen who
possess, by reason of age and relationship, a higher position
than that of her husband. Very often she will not even pronounce
the names of any of these elder gentlemen out of respect for
them. The status of the wife grows with that of her husband
during his lifetime. When he dies, she can either remain
living with his kinsmen, in which case she holds the same
position socially that he had during his lifetime, or she can

/Nomadic Moslems of Sinkiang/

563 Children and parents relationships differ also. They are charac-
593 terized by a much greater economic interdependence. The children
[369] of the city-dwellers have a certain degree of economic independ-
[434] ence, and have a small income of their own at an early age, but
no opportunity of the sort presents itself to the nomadic children.
[868] The sons help their fathers and learn from them how to manage
the livestock, how to shoot and hunt, how to bargain and sell, etc...
they remain attached to their families even after marriage, having
no separate property of their own.

[868] The daughters have much to learn from their mothers, in
preparation for the many responsibilities that they will have in the
future, and their help around the house is extremely valuable and
necessary. A daughter, however, does not retain her relation-
ship with her family after she is married, but shifts her allegiance
to her husband's family.

563 In the nomadic society, families constitute definite units of
592 production. This is the basis for their unity and close cooperation.
It is almost impossible for a couple to get along without the help
of their children and it is rare that their children would be able
to become economically independent. Moreover, the family frame-
work provides for the educational, religious, and social needs for
the individuals comprising it.

563 B. Marriage and Divorce Customs

184 Among the Turkis of the plains, for example at Kashgar,
562 women are at a discount, wives are cheap and divorces even cheaper.
582 Among the mountain people (particularly among the Kirghiz) how-
[586] ever, girls are at a premium and the would-be-bridegroom or his
father has to pay a heavy brideprice, which usually amounts to ten
to thirty yaks or their equivalent in other kinds of livestock. When
563 a boy has reached the age of six or seven and therefore may be
584 expected to survive until manhood, his parents ordinarily betroth
him to a neighbor's daughter of similar age. This betrothal is
known as the qalam. The female relatives of both parties play a
[583] leading part in the lengthy haggling about the brideprice which
precedes it.

563 When all yaks have been paid, and the young people have reached
585 the age of fourteen and sixteen years respectively, the bride's
people invite all the neighbors to a feast at which the marriage is
announced. The bride and bridegroom remain in their tents in the
background and do not attend. The feast and announcement, known
as the nikah, constitute the wedding, there being no other cere-
mony. However, the bridegroom cannot yet take his bride to his
own home. She continues to live with her parents for a period of
two to five months, during which the latter make and furnish an
aq-oi (tent with its felts, rugs, wall hangings, screens, pots, pans,
milk bowls, and other necessary items. The bridegroom continues